



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
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“TERRY AYENI PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRING TO COMMIT OVER \$1 MILLION IN WIRE FRAUD”

Spokane – Today, James A. McDevitt, United States Attorney for the Eastern Judicial District of Washington, announced that Terry Ayeni, age 43, a citizen of Nigeria, entered a plea of guilty on Friday, April 14, 2006, to conspiracy to commit wire fraud in violation of Title 18, United Code, Sections 371 and 1343. Mr. Ayeni faces a maximum punishment of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, three years of court supervision after release, the payment of restitution, and a \$100 special penalty assessment. Mr. Ayeni remains in custody. U.S. District Judge Fred Van Sickle ordered sentencing for July 7, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. in Spokane.

According to the plea agreement, Mr. Ayeni conspired with other individuals to defraud Donna and Arnold Burbank out of \$454,730. The scheme started when Donna Burbank, a resident of Eastern Washington, received a letter from an individual who claimed that he worked for the Nigerian government and that he had \$21.5 million to transfer into Donna Burbank’s account if she became his “overseas” investment partner. She was told to keep the offer in confidence. Mrs. Burbank was then contacted by Mr. Ayeni, who falsely identified himself as “Lemmy Stephens from Newark, New Jersey. Mr. Ayeni represented that he was associated with Global Security in New York and he advised Mrs. Burbank that she would need to send money first before she could receive any of the promised \$21.5 million. Over the next five months, Mr. Ayeni induced Donna Burbank to wire \$454,730 from the State of Washington to one or more bank accounts in New York and overseas in order to obtain the promised \$21.5 million. At various times, Mrs. Burbank was told that she needed to send the money to secure release of the \$21.5 million from Nigeria, purchase a “chemical” for \$125,000-\$265,000 a bottle in order to

“wash” the \$21.5 million which had been “blackened” so it could pass through “customs, purchase a “drug certificate” establishing that the \$21.5 million was not connected to any illegal drug activity, and to purchase a “Bermuda Anti-Terrorism Committee Certificate.

Mr. Ayeni previously pleaded guilty to defrauding victims out of \$627,132 in a related scheme in the Southern District of New York. In that case, Mr. Ayeni was convicted of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and was sentenced to serve forty-six months in prison, ordered to pay restitution, and ordered deported after completing his prison term.

In August of 2003, Donna Burbank, then the owner and operator of Ferry County Title and Escrow Company, Inc. located in Republic, Washington, pleaded guilty to two counts of misapplication of bank and credit union funds and was sentenced in August of 2004, to 30-months in prison and ordered to pay \$627,705 in restitution to the people she stole money from to pay Mr. Ayeni in the scheme.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney George J.C. Jacobs, III, and was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.